

REMARKS

Claims 1-7, 9-11, and 13-18 are pending in the application. New claim 18 has been added.

Drawings

The drawings have been objected because they do not show the inner edge of the base plate in contact with the inner edge of the inner panel.

Claims 1 and 16 have been amended, such that they are consistent with the drawings, to overcome this objection.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this objection.

Specification

The specification has been objected to because it fails to provide antecedent basis for the claim limitation of the inner edge of the base plate being in contact with the inner edge of the inner panel.

Claims 1 and 16 have been amended, such that they are consistent with the description in the specification, to overcome this objection.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this objection.

Pending Claims

Minor changes have been made to the pending claims to place them in better form for U.S. practice.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

(a) Claims 1-4 and 7 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Okamoto et al. (USP 6,139,088). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

In the “Response to Arguments” section of the Office Action, the Examiner alleges that “[S]ince claim 1 does not limit the base plate to a single homogeneous element, Okamoto et al, teaching a base plate comprising a plurality of elements does not prevent Okamoto et al. from anticipating the claims.”

In view of this assertion, independent claims 1 and 16 have been amended to require that “the base plate being formed of a homogeneous sheet” to overcome this rejection.

Claims 2-4 and 7, variously dependent on claim 1, are allowable at least for their dependency on claim 1.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

(b) Claims 1, 5, 6, 9-11, and 13-16 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Sakaguchi et al. (USP 6,640,497). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Sakaguchi discloses, in Fig. 2, a door 10 having an outer panel 13, inner panels 20, 21, 22 (arguably correspond to the “inner panel” of the present invention) attached to the outer panel 13 and defining an (central) opening, and a door module 12 (which arguably corresponds to the “base plate”) adapted to be attached to the inner panels 20, 21, 22.

In Sakaguchi, however, the door module 12 does not “cover an entire portion of the central opening of the inner panel” because, as shown in Fig. 2, it has a plurality of openings. Accordingly, Sakaguchi fails to disclose or suggest the “base plate” as recited in claim 1.

Claims 5, 6, 9-11, and 13-15, variously dependent on claim 1, are allowable at least for their dependency on claim 1.

Claim 16 is allowable at least for the similar reasons as stated in the foregoing with regard to claim 1.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 17 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sakaguchi et al. in view of Baldamus et al. (USP 4,648,208). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 17, dependent on claim 1, is allowable at least for its dependency on claim 1.

Further Baldamus does not affect the patentability of claim 1 because it merely discloses, in Fig. 1, a door unit 10 having a outershell 16, a door frame 14 (arguably corresponds to the “inner panel” of the present invention) having an (central) opening and adapted to be attached to the outershell 16, and an unit carrier 12 (arguably corresponds to the “base plate”) adapted to be attached to the door frame 14. As clearly shown in Fig. 1, the unit carrier 12 does not “cover an entire portion of the central opening of the inner panel” because the unit carrier 12 has a plurality of openings. Accordingly Baldamus fails to disclose or suggest the “base plate” as recited in claim 1.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

New Claim

Claim 18, dependent on claim 16, is allowable at least for its dependency on claim 16.

A favorable determination by the Examiner and allowance of claim 18 is earnestly solicited.

Request for Initialed Form PTO/SB/08

In reviewing the application file, the undersigned has noted that the appropriate initialed Form PTO/SB/08 in response to the Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) filed on January 30, 2006 has not been received by Applicant. The Examiner is therefore requested to return a copy of the initialed Form PTO/SB/08 to the undersigned as soon as possible.

Conclusion

Accordingly, in view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the rejections and allowance of the pending claims in the present application are respectfully requested.

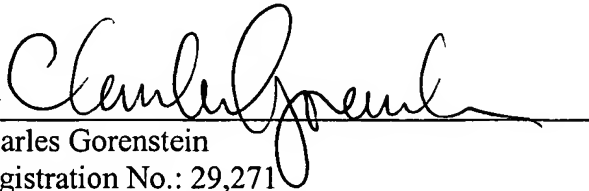
The Examiner is respectfully requested to enter this Reply After Final in that it raises no new issues. Alternatively, the Examiner is respectfully requested to enter this Reply After Final in that it places the application in better form for Appeal.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Maki Hatsumi (#40,417) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or to credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

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